



HOMELAND SECURITY AND AMERICAN RED CROSS CO-SPONSOR NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH 2005

Nationwide Effort to Encourage Americans to Prepare for Emergencies

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross today announced they will co-sponsor National Preparedness Month 2005, a nationwide effort held this September to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action.

"No community is truly prepared for a disaster until every individual, family and household takes personal responsibility for preparedness," said American Red Cross President and CEO Marsha J. Evans. "Red Cross chapters across the country are helping people learn how to create a family disaster plan so that each person knows what to do, where to go, and how to contact loved ones."

Throughout September, Homeland Security and the American Red Cross will work with local, state and federal government organizations and the private sector to highlight the importance of public emergency preparedness. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Representatives Christopher Cox (R-CA) and Bennie Thompson (D-MS) have agreed to serve as Congressional Co-Chairs of National Preparedness Month 2005. In addition, more than 125 national organizations (see attached listing) have already joined the National Preparedness Month Coalition, which will distribute emergency preparedness information, host events and sponsor activities across the country.

"We are pleased to have the American Red Cross, which has long been a leader in emergency preparedness and response, co-sponsor National Preparedness Month 2005," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "The commitment of the American Red Cross and the members of National Preparedness Month Coalition are integral as we work to encourage all Americans to prepare for emergencies. As leaders in their communities, these organizations will help spread life saving information and move the entire nation toward a greater state of preparedness."

National Preparedness Month will provide Americans with a variety of

opportunities to learn more about preparing for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist threats. Events, activities, and messages across the nation will encourage individuals to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, be informed about different threats and get involved in preparing their communities.

The initiative will officially launch with a public emergency preparedness fair on September 1, 2005 at Union Station in Washington, D.C. During the event individuals will receive preparedness information and materials and learn about training opportunities.

This will be the second annual National Preparedness Month. During the first National Preparedness Month, held in September 2004, a coalition of more than 80 organizations and all 56 states and territories held hundreds of events and activities across the nation.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, a Cabinet-level federal agency, promotes public emergency preparedness through the Ready campaign and Citizen Corps. Ready is a national public service advertising campaign produced by the Advertising Council in partnership with Homeland Security that is designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to potential terrorist attacks and other emergencies. Citizen Corps, Homeland Security's grassroots program, localizes Ready's preparedness messages and provides local opportunities for citizens to get emergency response training; participate in community exercises; and volunteer to support local emergency responders.

Governed by volunteers and supported by community donations, the American Red Cross is a nationwide network of nearly 900 locally supported chapters dedicated to saving lives and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Led by one million volunteers and 35,000 employees, the Red Cross annually mobilizes relief to families affected by some 70,000 disasters, trains more than 15 million people in lifesaving skills and keeps U.S. military families connected worldwide. The Red Cross is the largest supplier of blood and blood products to more than 3,000 hospitals across the nation and also assists victims of international disasters and conflicts at locations worldwide. The American Red Cross is not a government agency.

National Preparedness Month 2005 is a nationwide effort co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in the homes, businesses and schools. Any event or activity conducted during National Preparedness Month is purely voluntary, and Homeland Security is not financially obligated to any National Preparedness Month

Coalition Member. For more information or to become a National Preparedness Month Coalition Member visit www.Ready.gov

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